

What is claimed is:

1. A method of collecting images from a plurality of customers into a kiosk, and transferring images from the kiosk to an image-processing provider, wherein the kiosk  
5 includes a computer, a data storage device and an interface for capturing digital images, wherein the data storage device includes computer readable media for storing information representative of the digital images, the method comprising:

accepting image information from a customer into the interface of the kiosk;  
accepting user-identifier information into the computer, the user-identifier  
10 information corresponding to the customer;

accepting order information into the computer, the order information specifying a service to be provided relative to the image information;

storing into a local storage connected to the computer, a digital representation of the image information and associated user identifier information and order  
15 information for each of a plurality of different customers into a data structure; and

sending the data structure to the image-processing provider via a communication medium.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

20 removing the data structure from the local storage after the data structure has been sent to the image-processing provider.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the data structure includes a reel-control data structure and a plurality of roll data structures, and wherein the method further  
25 comprises:

in response to receipt of a first poll request at the kiosk and if the data structure is available, sending data structure address information corresponding to the available data structure from the kiosk to the image-processing provider via the communications medium;



10. The method of claim 1, wherein the accepting image information includes optical scanning of film images and generating digital representations of the film images.

5 11. The method of claim 1, wherein the accepting image information includes transferring image data directly from a digital-image storage medium.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the accepting image information includes reading image data directly from a memory stick into the kiosk.

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13. The method of claim 11, wherein the accepting image information includes reading image data directly from a rotatable storage disk into the kiosk.

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14. The method of claim 1, wherein the accepting image information includes transferring image data into a universal serial bus (USB) port of the kiosk.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein the accepting image information includes transferring image data into a wireless receiver port of the kiosk.

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16. The method of claim 1, wherein the accepting image information includes:  
accepting a container of undeveloped film into the kiosk;  
processing the undeveloped film to generate developed film in the kiosk; and  
optically scanning the developed film and generating at least one digital  
representation of the developed film.

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17. A computer-usable information medium having a computer program stored thereon for causing a suitably programmed system to transfer digital images between a source terminal and a repository system interconnected by a communications medium by performing the method of claim 1 when such program is executed on the system.

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18. A kiosk for accepting image-processing orders from a customer for processing at a remote image-processing provider, the kiosk comprising:

a controller;

a storage device operatively coupled to the controller;

5 an image input device operatively coupled to the controller, wherein the controller transfers digital image information from the image input device to the storage device;

a user input device operatively coupled to the controller to produce user-identifier information and order information based on input from the customer, wherein the order information specifies a service to be provided relative to the image information, and wherein the controller associates the user-identifier information and the order information with the digital image information; and

10 a data transmission interface operatively coupled to the controller and to a communication medium, wherein the controller sends the digital image information and its associated user-identifier information and order information to the image-processing provider via a communication medium.

19. The kiosk according to claim 18, further comprising:

a credit-card information input device operatively coupled to the controller.

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20. The kiosk according to claim 18, further comprising:

a display that shows to the customer at least one image from the image information.

25 21. The kiosk according to claim 20, wherein the user input device further accepts input from the customer to specify a modification to be made to at least one image from the image information, and wherein the display provides a visual indication of the image as modified by the modification.

30 22. The kiosk according to claim 18, further comprising:

a display that shows to the customer a plurality of thumbnail images from the image information.

23. The kiosk according to claim 22, further comprising:

5 a printer that prints a receipt that describes the order and includes a printout of the plurality of thumbnail images from the image information.

24. The kiosk according to claim 18, wherein the user input device further accepts order information indicating a plurality of delivery addresses to which at least  
10 one print from the image information is to be delivered.

25. The kiosk according to claim 18, wherein the image-input device includes an optical scanner of film images that generates digital representations of the film images.

15 26. The kiosk according to claim 18, wherein the image input device includes a digital camera interface that transfers image data directly from a digital camera.

27. The kiosk according to claim 18, wherein the image input device includes a storage medium interface that transfers image data directly from a storage medium.

20 28. The kiosk according to claim 27, wherein the storage medium interface includes a memory stick port into the kiosk.

25 29. The kiosk according to claim 27, wherein the storage medium interface includes a disk interface that reads image data directly from a rotatable storage disk into the kiosk.

30 30. The kiosk according to claim 27, wherein the storage medium interface includes a universal serial bus (USB) port into the kiosk.

31. The kiosk according to claim 27, wherein the storage medium interface includes a wireless receiver port into the kiosk.

32. The kiosk according to claim 18, wherein the image input device includes:  
a mechanical port that accepts a container of undeveloped film into the kiosk;  
a film processor coupled to the mechanical port that processes the undeveloped film to generate developed film in the kiosk; and  
an optical scanner that scans the developed film and generates at least one digital representation of the developed film.

33. A remote film processing system for obtaining digital image data from a customer and remotely processing image prints, the system comprising:  
a network;  
a kiosk coupled to the network; and  
means for obtaining the digital image data into the kiosk and locally storing the data, and for transferring the data to a repository system interconnected to the kiosk by the network.

34. A computer-implemented method of business comprising:  
accepting image information at a first business location;  
accepting user-identifier information and order information associated with the image information at the first business location;  
processing and digitally storing a plurality of images from the image information at the first business location;  
accepting payment at the first business location;  
transferring the digital stored images to a second business location across a communications medium;  
storing the digital images at the second business location;  
processing prints of the stored images at the second business location; and  
delivering the processed prints to a customer.

35. The method according to claim 34, wherein the first business location includes an automated kiosk.
36. The method according to claim 35, further comprising:  
5 displaying the images to the customer at the first business location.
37. The method according to claim 36, further comprising:  
accepting input from the customer specifying a modification to be made to at  
least one image; and  
10 displaying a modified image resulting from the modification.
38. The method according to claim 34, further comprising:  
accepting a payment from the customer into the kiosk.
- 15 39. The method according to claim 34, further comprising:  
accepting a credit-card payment from the customer into the kiosk.
40. The method according to claim 34, further comprising:  
accepting input from the customer specifying a delivery address for the  
20 processed prints.
41. The method according to claim 34, further comprising:  
accepting input from the customer specifying a plurality of delivery addresses  
for the processed prints.  
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42. The method according to claim 34, further comprising:  
accepting input from the customer specifying at least one delivery address for  
the processed prints;  
displaying the images to the customer at the first business location;  
30 accepting input from the customer specifying a modification to be made to at  
least one image;







wherein transferring the information over the communications channel further includes establishing a telephone connection between the image upload device and the image-processing provider.

5        50.     The method according to claim 45, wherein the telecommunications channel includes a cable network.

10       51.     The method according to claim 50, wherein the image upload kiosk includes a receptacle, wherein storing image and associated user-identification and order information includes:

         removing a data-storage medium from a digital imaging system;

         inserting the data-storage medium in the receptacle; and

         wherein transferring the information over the communications channel further includes establishing a connection through the cable network between the image upload

15       device and the image-processing provider.

20       52.     The method according to claim 45, wherein the image upload kiosk includes a cradle having a data transfer interface and wherein storing image and associated user-identification and order information includes placing a digital imaging system in the cradle.

25       53.     The method according to claim 52, wherein the digital imaging system includes a rechargeable electrical-energy source and wherein the cradle includes a battery-recharge circuit, wherein connecting the data storage device to the image upload device includes recharging the rechargeable electrical-energy source.

30       54.     The method according to claim 45, wherein the image upload kiosk includes a cradle and a button, wherein storing image and associated user-identification and order information includes placing the digital imaging system in the cradle and depressing the button.

55. The method according to claim 54, wherein the digital imaging system includes a rechargeable electrical-energy source and wherein the cradle includes a battery recharge circuit, wherein connecting the data storage device to the image upload device includes recharging the rechargeable electrical-energy source.

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56. An article of manufacture comprising a computer readable medium having instructions thereon, wherein the instructions, when executed in a computer, create a system for executing the method of claim 45.

10 57. A digital image transfer system, comprising:  
a processor;  
memory connected to the processor;  
a digital imaging system interface connected to the processor, wherein the digital  
imaging system interface is capable of receiving information representative of digital  
15 images from a digital imaging system;  
a user interface connected to the processor, the user interface capable of  
inputting user-identification, order, and payment information from each one of a  
plurality of customers;  
a storage device coupled to the processor, that stores the digital images and the  
20 associated user-identification and order information;  
an event detector coupled to the processor; and  
an image-processing provider interface connected to the processor, wherein the  
image-processing provider interface is capable of connecting to a communications  
medium in order to transfer digital images from the digital imaging system interface and  
25 the image information and the user-identification and order information from the user  
interface through the communications medium to an image-processing provider in  
response to an event detected by the event detector.

58. The system according to claim 57, wherein the event detector includes a timer  
30 and wherein the event is a time-based event.

59. The system according to claim 57, wherein the event detector includes an Internet connection and wherein the event is a poll message from the image-processing provider.

5 60. The system according to claim 57, wherein the event detector includes a storage space detector and wherein the event is a predetermined amount of image data being stored in the storage device.

10 61. The system according to claim 57, wherein the user interface further includes an image display that displays digital images to the customer.

62. A digital image upload apparatus comprising:  
a digital data interface for receiving digital image data. and  
means, coupled to the interface, for storing and later uploading the digital  
15 image data across a communications medium.

63. A method of collecting images and order information by an image-processing provider from at least one image kiosk, wherein the image kiosk includes a computer, a data storage device and an interface for capturing digital images, wherein the data  
20 storage device includes computer readable media for storing information representative of the digital images, the method comprising:

accepting image information from a customer into the interface of the kiosk;  
storing the image information into a local storage;  
sending inquiring signal from the image-processing provider to the kiosk;  
25 replying the inquiring signal with an image use signal;  
transferring the image data to the image-processing provider via a communication medium.

64. The method of claim 63, further comprising:  
30 removing the image information from the local storage after the image-data transfer.